

# **Constitution of the Faculty Senate STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY**

## **PREAMBLE**

A University is a community of scholars engaged in the free discussion, research, and dissemination of ideas and knowledge. To the end that governing this University shall embody the full freedom of discussion, participation, and examination of ideas by faculty, students, and administrators in the search for truth, the administration and the faculty of Stephen F. Austin State University hereby establish this Constitution of the Faculty Senate of Stephen F. Austin State University.

## **Article I. Apportionment and Election**

**Section 1.** A Faculty Senate is hereby established by Stephen F. Austin State University.

**Section 2.** The Faculty Senate shall be elected by and from the voting members of the faculty of Stephen F. Austin State University.

**Section 3.** Voting members of the faculty are defined as those holding faculty rank and employed full time by the University. Faculty holding an administrative position of department chair or higher are not eligible to serve in the Senate.

**Section 4.** For the purposes of electing members of the Faculty Senate, the University shall be divided into the following groups: Business, Education, Fine Arts, Forestry and Agriculture, Liberal and Applied Arts, Library, and Sciences and Mathematics. Each group shall have at least one representative; no department or school shall have more than two representatives; apportionment shall be adjusted every three years or when changes to the above groups requires. Representation from each group shall be determined by allotting to each group one representative for every four percent, or major fraction thereof, of the voting faculty of the University. For the purposes of apportionment or allotment of representatives the Chair-Elect assuming the office of Chairperson, the office of senator from the group from which the Chairperson was elected shall be deemed vacant, and an election shall be held to elect an additional Senator from the group in question. Should the officially recognized duties of a faculty member be divided so as to place the member in two or more of the above-named groups, the member may choose the group in which the member shall be placed for representation.

**Section 5.** The term of membership of the Faculty Senate shall be three years, with the exception of a member of the Faculty Senate elected to the position of Chair-Elect. The term of membership of the Chair-Elect will end at the completion of his/her term as Chairperson of the Faculty Senate. The term of other members of the Faculty Senate shall expire at the end of his/her elective term, upon the seating of his/her elected successor.

(a) To provide for continuity of the organization, one-third of the membership shall be elected each year. Upon completion of two consecutive terms, no faculty shall be eligible for re-election until the expiration of one academic year.

(b) If, at the time apportionment is adjusted, it is determined that an imbalance in the number of first,

second, and third-year senators has occurred, adjustments to the number of elections for three-year terms will be made by designating an appropriate number of elections for two-year terms. Attention should be given to achieving a balance of first, second, and third-year senators in these faculty groups. Should there continue to be overrepresentation of any one term year in any of the faculty groups noted, a second adjustment, through the designation of two-year term elections in the second succeeding year, will be made. Should it be necessary to employ elections for two-year terms, eligible faculty will be surveyed to identify those candidates running for either two-year or three-year terms. For purposes of clarity in determining term-years in the succeeding years, the first year of an elected two-year senator will be designated as the third term-year.

**Section 6.** The non-tenure track faculty shall be granted six seats in the Senate. Seats will be apportioned one per College. If any Colleges cannot provide a nominee, then that seat will be filled at large by the nominee(s) from the other Colleges receiving the greatest number of votes. These shall be voting seats and the term will be for three years with a maximum of one term. After serving one term, no non-tenure track faculty representative shall be eligible for re-election until the expiration of one academic year.

**Section 7.** Elections shall be held during April of each year. Prior to the election the Committee for Elections shall notify all who are eligible for election to the Faculty Senate. Any eligible person may be nominated by a voting member of their faculty group. Non-tenure track faculty may be nominated by any non-tenure track faculty member. The Committee for Elections shall submit to the faculty of the group concerned a first ballot consisting of the names of all nominated faculty who have indicated a willingness to serve. The two candidates with the highest vote totals for each available Senate position shall be selected to appear on the second ballot. The candidate(s) who receive(s) the plurality of votes for the position in the second ballot shall be declared elected. When there are not more than two names on the first ballot for each available position, the first ballot shall be considered the electoral ballot.

**Section 8.** Whenever a vacancy exists in the Faculty Senate for any reason whatsoever, it shall, until the next regular election, be filled by vote of the Faculty Senate from the respective group in which the vacancy exists.

**Section 9.** A temporary vacancy created by a leave of absence will be filled for the duration of the leave by a replacement elected by the Senate from the respective group. When the member returns from leave, he/she shall fill out the unexpired term and he/she and his/her temporary replacement.

## **Article II: Officers of the Faculty Senate**

**Section 1.** In May of each year Faculty Senate will elect from their membership Chairperson, Chair-Elect, Secretary, Parliamentarian, and Treasurer to serve one-year terms. The Faculty Senate may also elect other officers as it sees fit.

**Section 2.** The Chair-Elect shall be chosen by the membership of the Senate from membership of the Senate and elected by the membership of the Senate. The Chair-Elect shall become acquainted with the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson during the following academic year and assume the duties of the Chairperson the next academic year after election.

**Section 3.** Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of Chairperson, the Chair-Elect shall assume that position for the remainder of the term. Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of Chair-Elect, Secretary, or Treasurer, the Faculty Senate shall elect a successor to serve for the remainder of the term.

**Section 4.** The Chairperson shall be the principal executive officer of the Faculty Senate and shall have such powers as are appropriate to the office. The Chairperson shall be an ex officio member of the Faculty Senate committees which the Chairperson shall appoint with the consent of the Faculty Senate.

### **Article III. Functions**

The Faculty Senate shall formulate and recommend academic policy for the University, acting with due regard to the autonomy, requests, and needs of the specific departments, divisions, schools, and colleges, to the advice of the President of the University and to the regulations of the Board of Regents of Stephen F. Austin State University and the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University Systems. Such policies become official when signed by the President of the University. The Faculty Senate may consider all other matters of general welfare to the University. Decisions on all matters shall be final when approved by the President of the University and the Board of Regents of Stephen F. Austin State University.

### **Article IV. Senate Meetings and Procedures**

**Section 1.** The Faculty Senate shall meet regularly once during the months of September, October, November, February, March, April, and May of each year and at the call of the President of the University, the Chairperson of the Senate, or five or more of its members.

**Section 2.** Except as otherwise provided herein, procedure shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

**Section 3.** The Faculty Senate must give consideration to any written recommendation sponsored by any eight or more members of the faculty.

**Section 4.** Attendance at all meetings of the Faculty Senate is the duty of Senators. The Secretary shall enter the names of the absentees on the Minutes of the Faculty Senate. Absences may be excused for cause by the Chairperson. In each case, the reason for the member being absent shall be entered on the Minutes of the Faculty Senate. A senator may designate a representative of their college to sit in their place for all or part of a meeting. If a member has three unexcused absences or does not authorize a substitute during his/her term of office, the right of membership on the Faculty Senate is automatically forfeited for the remainder of the unexpired term.

**Section 5.** A quorum shall consist of one more than one-half of the voting membership.

**Section 6.** The Faculty Senate will vote by secret ballot upon the request of any two members.

## **Article V: Meetings of the faculty**

**Section 1.** Meetings of the faculty may be called by the Senate, either upon its initiative or upon the written petition to the Senate by eight voting members of the faculty. Notice must be given to the faculty at least forty-eight hours in advance of any meeting called under this provision, and the notice must include a statement of the issue to be considered.

**Section 2.** In meetings of the faculty, a quorum shall consist of one more than one-half of the voting faculty.

**Section 3.** A simple majority shall be necessary to pass upon recommendations.

**Section 4.** If one-third of the members of the Faculty Senate at a Faculty Senate meeting request a secret ballot on a substantive question or a series of related substantive questions, the Chairperson shall order such a secret ballot.

**Section 5.** Except as otherwise provided herein, procedure shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

## **Article VI. Amendments**

**Section 1.** Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by a majority vote of the Faculty Senate or a petition to the Faculty Senate signed by eight voting members of the faculty.

**Section 2.** Proposed amendments accepted by the Senate, or amendments proposed by the Senate, must be voted upon within thirty days after the Faculty Senate meeting in which they are approved. Petition amendments must be acted upon within thirty days of their being received by the Senate. Copies of the proposed amendments must be distributed to voting members of the faculty at least seven days prior to balloting.

**Section 3.** Amendments shall be ratified by secret ballot, by two-thirds of the votes cast on the amendment by the voting faculty.

**Section 4.** Amendments become official when approved by the President.

*(Amended by vote of the Faculty, March 2002, and approved by the President, April 2002; April 2006, updated May 2009; amended by vote of the Faculty, April 2013 and approved by the President April 2013; amended by vote of the Faculty, October 2019, and approved by the President, October 2019, amended by vote of the Faculty, February 2020, and approved by the President, March 2020; amended by vote of the Faculty, March 2021, and approved by the President, April 2021; last updated April 2021)*